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**RESEARCH  
REPORT**

**STATISTICS OF  
LARGE CITY  
SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

1983 EDITION

BY  
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A REPORT OF THE  
RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF THE  
AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO

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## CONTENTS

|                                             |    |
|---------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction .....                          | 2  |
| Pupils, Teachers, and Schools .....         | 3  |
| Pupil Membership .....                      | 3  |
| Classroom Teachers .....                    | 6  |
| Pupil/Teacher Ratios .....                  | 6  |
| Number of Schools and Days in Session ..... | 9  |
| City School Finances .....                  | 11 |
| Trends .....                                | 11 |
| Revenues .....                              | 11 |
| Expenditures .....                          | 14 |
| Debt .....                                  | 16 |
| Bond Ratings .....                          | 16 |

## INTRODUCTION

The first edition of "Statistics of Large City School Districts" was issued by the AFT Department of Research in February, 1981, and it became one of the most popular of the Research Report series. That report contained data through the 1978-79 school year. The report proved to be particularly useful to local union leaders in urban school districts who desired comparative data on enrollments, numbers of teachers, salaries, and school finances. That first edition relied heavily on information produced by the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education. One of the victims of federal budget cuts by the Reagan Administration has been the data gathering and reporting activities of various federal agencies. Only recently has the data been available to update the first edition of "Statistics of Large City School Districts." This revised edition primarily uses information published by the National Center for Education Statistics and the Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.

Questions about the sources of data in this report, the meaning and use of this information, or other questions concerning large city school district data should be directed to the:

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## PUPILS, TEACHERS, AND SCHOOLS

The 1981 edition of this report began by noting that large city school districts had been "experiencing unprecedented difficulties" over the previous ten years, including problems of declining enrollments, financial crisis, and maintaining quality programs in times of adversity. Conditions have not changed since the publication of that report. Most of the statistics in this section will show a continuation of previous trends. Information in later sections will indicate that these trends will likely continue into the foreseeable future.

### Pupil Membership

The twenty cities in this report ranged in size of pupil membership in 1980-81 from New York City, the largest with almost one million pupils, to San Francisco with slightly under 60,000 pupils (see Table 1). These twenty cities are the largest U.S. cities according to the 1970 Census. Use of the 1970 largest city list allows continuity over time, so that comparisons with past years can be easily made. These twenty city school districts had a total 1980-81 enrollment of 3,870,515, or about 9.7 percent of all U.S. public school enrollment.

Six "mega-school districts" educated about 6.4 percent of all U.S. public school pupils in 1980-81. These school districts included New York (943,701 pupils), Los Angeles (526,768), Chicago (458,497), Philadelphia (223,889), Detroit (202,859), and Houston (194,033). Six additional city school districts had enrollments exceeding 100,000. These included Phoenix (169,159), Dallas (130,346), Baltimore (129,984), Memphis (111,444), San Diego (111,087), and Washington (100,049).

There are eight districts in this report with enrollments of less than 100,000: Milwaukee (87,873), New Orleans (83,105), Cleveland (82,144), Boston (67,007), Indianapolis (66,031), St. Louis (63,293), San Antonio (60,994), and San Francisco (58,378).

It should be noted that there are other school districts in the United States which are larger than some of the districts in the report which are not included here because they are county school districts.

None of the twenty large city school districts gained in student enrollment between 1976-77 and 1980-81. Losses ranged from 4.5 percent in Phoenix to 33.1 percent in Cleveland (see Figure 1). Those city school districts with losses in

TABLE 1  
PUPIL MEMBERSHIP IN LARGE CITIES  
1976-77 THROUGH 1980-81

|               | Pupil Membership |           |         |         |         |
|---------------|------------------|-----------|---------|---------|---------|
|               | 1976-77          | 1977-78   | 1978-79 | 1979-80 | 1980-81 |
| New York      | 1,077,028        | 1,036,135 | 998,871 | 962,973 | 943,701 |
| Los Angeles   | 601,429          | 586,725   | 665,754 | 549,897 | 526,768 |
| Chicago       | 524,221          | 511,113   | 470,100 | 477,339 | 458,497 |
| Philadelphia  | 260,787          | 253,798   | 244,417 | 231,952 | 223,889 |
| Detroit       | 236,279          | 237,592   | 230,407 | 211,377 | 202,859 |
| Houston       | 210,025          | 206,998   | 201,960 | 193,907 | 194,033 |
| Phoenix       | 177,204          | 183,716   | 175,467 | 169,875 | 169,159 |
| Dallas        | 141,407          | 134,590   | 132,061 | 130,357 | 130,346 |
| Baltimore     | 133,038          | 152,153   | 145,503 | 136,187 | 129,984 |
| Memphis       | 120,322          | 115,637   | 114,686 | 113,729 | 111,444 |
| San Diego     | 120,667          | 118,558   | 116,396 | 113,704 | 111,087 |
| Washington    | 125,848          | 119,875   | 113,858 | 106,156 | 100,049 |
| Milwaukee     | 109,151          | 101,192   | 95,727  | 91,940  | 87,873  |
| New Orleans   | 93,364           | 91,434    | 89,010  | 86,783  | 83,105  |
| Cleveland     | 122,727          | 114,979   | 104,676 | 92,409  | 82,144  |
| Boston        | 76,215           | 76,889    | 71,284  | 68,951  | 67,007  |
| Indianapolis  | 82,102           | 78,321    | 73,655  | 69,729  | 66,031  |
| St. Louis     | 82,804           | 77,743    | 73,060  | 68,964  | 63,293  |
| San Antonio   | 65,929           | 64,277    | 63,209  | 61,816  | 60,994  |
| San Francisco | 68,736           | 64,570    | 61,990  | 55,147  | 58,378  |

Source: National Center for Education Statistics data.

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4/83

FIGURE 1  
CHANGE IN PUPIL MEMBERSHIP IN LARGE CITIES  
1976-77 TO 1980-81

1. Loss of Less Than 10 Percent

|             |          |           |          |
|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Phoenix     | (- 4.5%) | Houston   | (- 7.6%) |
| Memphis     | (- 7.4%) | Dallas    | (- 7.8%) |
| San Antonio | (- 7.5%) | San Diego | (- 7.9%) |

2. Loss Between 10 and 15 Percent

|             |          |              |          |
|-------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| New Orleans | (-11.0%) | Chicago      | (-12.5%) |
| Boston      | (-12.1%) | Detroit      | (-14.1%) |
| New York    | (-12.4%) | Philadelphia | (-14.1%) |
| Los Angeles | (-12.4%) |              |          |

3. Loss Between 15 and 20 Percent

|               |          |              |          |
|---------------|----------|--------------|----------|
| San Francisco | (-15.1%) | Milwaukee    | (-19.5%) |
| Baltimore     | (-18.3%) | Indianapolis | (-19.6%) |

4. Loss Exceeding 20 Percent

|            |          |           |          |
|------------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Washington | (-20.5%) | Cleveland | (-33.1%) |
| St. Louis  | (-23.6%) |           |          |

Source: Table 1.

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pupils of less than ten percent were all "Sun Belt" cities in the South or Southwest. These were Phoenix, Memphis, San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, and San Diego. Three of these districts are in Texas, the only large state that is experiencing significant enrollment increases statewide.

Most of the largest districts experienced four year enrollment declines between ten and fifteen percent. These included New Orleans, Boston, New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit and Philadelphia. San Francisco, Baltimore, Milwaukee, and Indianapolis were hit more severely, with declines between fifteen and twenty percent between 1976-77 and 1980-81.

Three districts reported enrollment declines exceeding twenty percent over the four years. Washington lost 20.5 percent of its enrollment, St. Louis lost 23.6 percent, and Cleveland's enrollment dropped 33.1 percent.

Between 1976-77 and 1980-81, the twenty cities together lost almost 585,000 pupils, or 13.1 percent of the 1976-77 enrollment.

#### Classroom Teachers

The number of classroom teachers is based on a full-time equivalent (FTE) measure (see Table 2). New York, the largest of the city school districts, had 43,105 FTE teachers in 1980-81, a drop of about 1500 from 1979-80, and a four year decrease of 5,800. Los Angeles reported a drop of almost 9,000 FTE teachers from 1976-77 to 1980-81, while Chicago only lost less than 1500. Over the four year period, Philadelphia reported a loss of about 900 FTE teachers and Detroit indicated a gain of over 500. Other city school districts showing a gain in FTE classroom teachers between 1976-77 and 1980-81 were Houston, Dallas, Memphis, and St. Louis. Particularly large decreases were reported in Baltimore, San Diego, Washington, Cleveland and San Francisco.

#### Pupil/Teacher Ratios

In 1980-81, the pupil/teacher ratios for the twenty largest city school districts ranged from a low of 13.1 in Boston to a high of 26.6 in Los Angeles (see Table 3). Other large city school districts with low pupil/teacher ratios were St. Louis (17.0), Philadelphia (17.1), Dallas (17.4), and Baltimore (17.9). Teacher layoffs since 1980-81 have produced markedly higher pupil/teacher ratios in some of these cities. Between 1977-78 and 1980-81, only four of these districts increased their pupil/teacher ratios, while the ratio decreased in 16 of the districts. The primary reason for the decrease in pupil/teacher ratios in most large city school districts has been the increase in classroom

TABLE 2  
CLASSROOM TEACHERS IN LARGE CITIES  
(FULL-TIME EQUIVALENTS)  
1976-77 THROUGH 1980-81

|               | Classroom Teachers (in full-time equivalents) |         |         |         |         |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|               | 1976-77                                       | 1977-78 | 1978-79 | 1979-80 | 1980-81 |
| New York      | 48,931                                        | 50,580  | 52,547  | 44,641  | 43,105  |
| Los Angeles   | 28,700                                        | 29,216  | 29,200  | 22,670  | 19,810  |
| Chicago       | 23,081                                        | 23,160  | 25,444  | 22,573  | 21,611  |
| Philadelphia  | 13,957                                        | 13,222  | 11,775  | 13,422  | 13,063  |
| Detroit       | 8,847                                         | 8,847   | 8,997   | 9,315   | 9,361   |
| Houston       | 9,237                                         | 9,189   | 9,902   | 9,926   | 9,826   |
| Phoenix       | 7,969                                         | 8,060   | 8,400   | 7,859   | 7,663   |
| Dallas        | 6,668                                         | 6,431   | 7,417   | 7,399   | 7,483   |
| Baltimore     | 8,240                                         | 8,165   | 7,762   | 7,542   | 7,258   |
| Memphis       | 5,675                                         | 5,675   | 5,698   | 5,845   | 5,898   |
| San Diego     | 5,400                                         | 5,349   | 5,700   | 5,128   | 4,578   |
| Washington    | 6,057                                         | 6,022   | 5,964   | 5,946   | 5,238   |
| Milwaukee     | 5,366                                         | 5,066   | 5,152   | 4,904   | 4,771   |
| New Orleans   | 4,380                                         | 4,402   | 4,324   | 4,500   | 4,010   |
| Cleveland     | 5,303                                         | 5,032   | 4,399   | 4,399   | 4,145   |
| Boston        | NA                                            | 4,137   | 4,221   | 5,102   | 5,115   |
| Indianapolis  | 3,524                                         | 3,868   | 3,715   | 3,358   | 3,392   |
| St. Louis     | 3,082                                         | 3,490   | 3,752   | 3,698   | 3,733   |
| San Antonio   | 3,202                                         | 3,124   | 3,133   | 3,121   | 3,095   |
| San Francisco | 4,100                                         | 3,853   | 4,200   | 3,360   | 2,999   |

Source: National Center for Education Statistics data.

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TABLE 3  
PUPIL/TEACHER RATIOS IN LARGE CITIES  
1977-78 THROUGH 1980-81

|               | Pupil/Teacher Ratios |         |         |         |
|---------------|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
|               | 1977-78              | 1978-79 | 1979-80 | 1980-81 |
| New York      | 20.5                 | 19.0    | 21.6    | 21.9    |
| Los Angeles   | 20.1                 | 22.8    | 24.3    | 26.6    |
| Chicago       | 22.1                 | 18.5    | 21.1    | 21.2    |
| Philadelphia  | 18.5                 | 20.8    | 17.3    | 17.1    |
| Detroit       | 26.9                 | 25.6    | 22.7    | 21.7    |
| Houston       | 22.5                 | 20.4    | 19.5    | 19.7    |
| Phoenix       | 22.8                 | 21.8    | 21.6    | 22.1    |
| Dallas        | 20.9                 | 17.8    | 17.6    | 17.4    |
| Baltimore     | 18.6                 | 18.7    | 18.1    | 17.9    |
| Memphis       | 20.4                 | 20.1    | 19.5    | 18.9    |
| San Diego     | 22.2                 | 21.8    | 22.2    | 24.3    |
| Washington    | 19.9                 | 19.1    | 17.9    | 19.1    |
| Milwaukee     | 20.0                 | 18.6    | 18.7    | 18.4    |
| New Orleans   | 20.8                 | 20.6    | 19.3    | 20.7    |
| Cleveland     | 22.8                 | 23.8    | 21.0    | 19.8    |
| Boston        | 18.6                 | 16.9    | 13.5    | 13.1    |
| Indianapolis  | 20.2                 | 19.8    | 20.8    | 19.5    |
| St. Louis     | 22.3                 | 19.5    | 18.6    | 17.0    |
| San Antonio   | 20.6                 | 20.2    | 19.8    | 19.7    |
| San Francisco | 16.8                 | 16.1    | 16.4    | 19.5    |

Source: National Center for Education Statistics data.

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4/83

teaching staff for children with special needs, such as the handicapped, the disadvantaged, and the limited English proficient. There is little or no evidence to indicate that pupil/teacher ratios have been declining in regular classrooms. In fact, the opposite seems to be happening.

#### Number of Schools and Days in Session

Table 4 shows the number of schools in each of the districts and the legal minimum number of days school must be in session. New York has the largest number of schools, with 987. Los Angeles (626) and Chicago (620) are the only other large city districts with over 500 schools.

Nine of the districts (New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Baltimore, Washington, Milwaukee, New Orleans, Cleveland, and Boston) report that the legal minimum days that school must be in session is 180 days. Other districts report fewer days for the legal minimum.

TABLE 4  
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS AND MINIMUM DAYS IN SESSION

|               | Total Elementary and<br>Secondary Schools | Minimum Number of<br>Days in Session |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| New York      | 987                                       | 180                                  |
| Los Angeles   | 626                                       | 175                                  |
| Chicago       | 620                                       | 176                                  |
| Philadelphia  | 272                                       | 180                                  |
| Detroit       | 319                                       | 180                                  |
| Houston       | 238                                       | 175                                  |
| Phoenix       | 213                                       | 175                                  |
| Dallas        | 193                                       | 175                                  |
| Baltimore     | 202                                       | 180                                  |
| Memphis       | 177                                       | 175                                  |
| San Diego     | 161                                       | 175                                  |
| Washington    | 188                                       | 180                                  |
| Milwaukee     | 146                                       | 180                                  |
| New Orleans   | 140                                       | 180                                  |
| Cleveland     | 177                                       | 180                                  |
| Boston        | 156                                       | 180                                  |
| Indianapolis  | 117                                       | 175                                  |
| St. Louis     | 150                                       | 174                                  |
| San Antonio   | 91                                        | 175                                  |
| San Francisco | 107                                       | 175                                  |

Source: National Center for Education Statistics data.

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## CITY SCHOOL FINANCES

### Trends

Table 5 shows trends in revenues, expenditures, and debt between 1978-79 and 1980-81 for all U.S. school districts with enrollments of 50,000 or more. Over the two year period, general revenues for large school districts increased 18.4 percent. The largest increases in revenue came from state sources. State revenues for large school districts increased 31.7 percent over the period. Federal revenues rose 10.2 percent, while local revenues only went up 8.1 percent. Local property tax revenues hardly registered any gain at all, going up 0.3 percent. For dependent school districts, contributors from parent governments increased 3.6 percent over the two years. The biggest local revenue gains came from charges and miscellaneous revenues, which went up 40.4 percent. School lunch sales and interest earnings are the largest single items in this latter category.

The revenue trends show a broad picture of large school districts which are increasing their dependence on the state government for funding because of flat or declining local tax bases.

One year trends, from 1979-80 to 1980-81, show a similar picture, but provide more detail. Over the one year period, federal revenues actually dropped by 1.8 percent and it appears that property tax revenue increases were forced because of this. State revenues still outpaced revenues in general with an increase of 8.4 percent.

General expenditures went up 16.8 percent between 1978-79 and 1980-81, and 5.2 percent between 1979-80 and 1980-81. Expenditures for current operations besides wages and salaries, contradicting the notion that salary increases are causing financial problems in large school districts.

Total debt outstanding has been decreasing over the period 1978-79 to 1980-81.

### Revenues

Per pupil revenues for the nineteen of the twenty large city school districts are shown in Table 6. Per pupil general revenues ranged from a low of \$1854 in San Antonio to a high of \$4567 in Boston. The median district was Los Angeles, with a per pupil general revenue of \$3010. Large city districts with spending above the median were Boston, Milwaukee, Cleveland, Washington, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, New York and St. Louis. Low revenue districts were San Antonio,

TABLE 5  
FINANCIAL TRENDS OF LARGE U.S. SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
1978-79 THROUGH 1980-81

|                       | Percent Change     |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|                       | 1978-79 to 1980-81 | 1979-80 to 1980-81 |
| General Revenue       | +18.4              | + 5.3              |
| Federal Revenue       | +10.2              | - 1.8              |
| State Revenue         | +31.7              | + 8.4              |
| Local Revenue         | + 8.1              | + 4.0              |
| Property Tax          | + 0.3              | + 7.7              |
| Parent Govt. Contrib. | + 3.6              | + 2.9              |
| Charges and Misc.     | +40.4              | +15.0              |
| General Expenditures  | +16.8              | + 5.2              |
| Current Operations    | +17.6              | + 5.5              |
| Salaries and Wages    | +14.5              | + 5.2              |
| Other                 | +26.2              | + 6.3              |
| Capital Outlay        | +13.5              | + 2.5              |
| Debt Outstanding      | -18.6              | - 9.4              |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Finances of Public Schools Systems in 1978-79 and 1980-81.

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TABLE 6  
PER PUPIL REVENUES OF LARGE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
1980-81

| City School District | Per Pupil, General Revenue |                 |         |         |
|----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------|---------|---------|
|                      | Total                      | Federal         | State   | Local   |
| New York             | \$3,047                    | \$389           | \$1,217 | \$1,440 |
| Los Angeles          | 3,010                      | 305             | 2,148   | 554     |
| Chicago              | 3,313                      | 396             | 1,544   | 1,373   |
| Philadelphia         | 3,275                      | 517             | 1,493   | 1,265   |
| Detroit              | 2,832                      | 435             | 1,351   | 1,047   |
| Houston              | 2,304                      | 220             | 786     | 1,298   |
| Phoenix              |                            | N O R E P O R T |         |         |
| Dallas               | 2,425                      | 255             | 856     | 1,315   |
| Baltimore            | 2,571                      | 394             | 1,217   | 960     |
| Memphis              | 1,952                      | 316             | 653     | 982     |
| San Diego            | 2,868                      | 417             | 1,439   | 1,012   |
| Washington           | 3,351                      | 533             | --      | 2,818   |
| Milwaukee            | 3,695                      | 488             | 1,733   | 1,474   |
| New Orleans          | 2,320                      | 429             | 1,057   | 834     |
| Cleveland            | 3,534                      | 671             | 1,312   | 1,551   |
| Boston               | 4,567                      | 418             | 2,199   | 1,950   |
| Indianapolis         | 2,640                      | 362             | 1,304   | 974     |
| St. Louis            | 3,028                      | 551             | 1,228   | 1,189   |
| San Antonio          | 1,854                      | 394             | 1,093   | 367     |
| San Francisco        | 3,193                      | 505             | 2,200   | 488     |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census,  
Finances of Public School Systems in 1980-81 (GF  
81 No. 8).

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Department of Research  
4/83

Memphis, Houston, New Orleans, Dallas, Baltimore, Indianapolis, Detroit, and San Diego.

Those large city school districts with the highest per pupil federal revenues were Cleveland (\$671), St. Louis (\$551), Washington (\$533), Philadelphia (\$517), and San Francisco (\$505). The median district was San Diego (\$417).

The effects of Proposition 13 in California and Proposition 2½ in Massachusetts on local revenues and state-local relations can be seen in the per pupil state revenues. Those cities with the highest per pupil state revenues were San Francisco (\$2,200), Boston (\$2,199), and Los Angeles (\$2,148). Local tax revolts have placed a greater burden on state governments for local services. Particularly low per pupil state revenues were found in Memphis (\$653), Houston (\$786), and Dallas (\$856).

The local revenue per pupil was highest in Washington (\$2,818), which has no state revenue. Washington was followed by Boston (\$1,950), Cleveland (\$1,551), Milwaukee (\$1,474), and New York (\$1,440). The median district was St. Louis (\$1,189).

As the trend data above showed, those districts with a heavier reliance on state revenues have been generally better off, since state revenues have been increasing faster than revenues from other sources.

### Expenditures

Table 7 shows per pupil expenditures for 1980-81. Again, the lowest figure was in San Antonio (\$1,743) and the highest in Boston (\$4,244). Since revenues roughly equal expenditures, this is not surprising. The median district was St. Louis (\$2,886). A more meaningful figure is total direct current expenditures per pupil. The highest ranking districts on this measure were Boston (\$3,819), Cleveland (\$3,695), Milwaukee (\$3,561), San Francisco (\$2,998), and Washington (\$2,920). Ranking low were San Antonio (\$1,665), Memphis (\$1,787), and Houston (\$1,821).

Per pupil expenditures for instruction showed less variation. They ranged from a high of \$2,530 in Milwaukee to a low of \$1,033 in New Orleans. The median figure was \$1,569 (Dallas). Other districts with above average expenditures per pupil for instruction were Boston, Cleveland, San Francisco, New York, and San Diego. Per pupil current expenditures for other than instruction varied from a low of \$312 in San Antonio to a high of \$1,688 in Cleveland. In some cases, high expenditures per pupil in this category represents an abnormally high overhead resulting from severely declining enrollment.

TABLE 7  
PER PUPIL EXPENDITURES OF LARGE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
1980-81

| City School District | Per Pupil General Expenditure |         |                     |         |                |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------|---------------------|---------|----------------|
|                      | Total                         | Total   | Current Instruction | Other   | Capital Outlay |
| New York             | \$3,004                       | \$2,812 | \$1,795             | \$1,017 | \$136          |
| Los Angeles          | 2,825                         | 2,711   | 1,495               | 1,216   | 68             |
| Chicago              | 2,735                         | 2,554   | 1,476               | 1,088   | 100            |
| Philadelphia         | 3,400                         | 2,840   | 1,624               | 1,216   | 18             |
| Detroit              | 2,964                         | 2,622   | 1,611               | 1,011   | 287            |
| Houston              | 2,133                         | 1,821   | 1,362               | 459     | 257            |
| Phoenix              |                               |         | NO R E P O R T      |         |                |
| Dallas               | 2,217                         | 2,083   | 1,569               | 515     | 81             |
| Baltimore            | 2,439                         | 2,210   | 1,353               | 857     | 177            |
| Memphis              | 1,897                         | 1,787   | 1,201               | 586     | 67             |
| San Diego            | 2,927                         | 2,839   | 1,729               | 1,110   | 73             |
| Washington           | 2,937                         | 2,920   | 1,624               | 1,295   | 18             |
| Milwaukee            | 3,699                         | 3,567   | 2,530               | 1,038   | 31             |
| New Orleans          | 2,066                         | 2,003   | 1,033               | 969     | 24             |
| Cleveland            | 3,865                         | 3,695   | 2,007               | 1,688   | 139            |
| Boston               | 4,244                         | 3,819   | 2,471               | 1,348   | 173            |
| Indianapolis         | 2,640                         | 2,362   | 1,322               | 1,039   | 254            |
| St. Louis            | 2,886                         | 2,841   | 1,546               | 1,295   | 32             |
| San Antonio          | 1,743                         | 1,665   | 1,353               | 312     | 53             |
| San Francisco        | 3,150                         | 2,998   | 1,865               | 1,133   | 2              |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Finances of Public School Systems in 1980-81 (GF 81, No. 8).

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TABLE 6  
PER PUPIL DEBT OUTSTANDING OF LARGE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS  
1980-81

| City School District | Per Pupil Debt Outstanding |
|----------------------|----------------------------|
| New York             | \$ 737                     |
| Los Angeles          | 330                        |
| Chicago              | 2,015                      |
| Philadelphia         | 1,165                      |
| Detroit              | 883                        |
| Houston              | 1,082                      |
| Phoenix              | NO REPORT                  |
| Dallas               | 1,027                      |
| Baltimore            | 1,092                      |
| Memphis              | 746                        |
| San Diego            | 149                        |
| Washington           | --                         |
| Milwaukee            | 550                        |
| New Orleans          | 896                        |
| Cleveland            | 1,704                      |
| Boston               | 3,181                      |
| Indianapolis         | 12                         |
| St. Louis            | 125                        |
| San Antonio          | 445                        |
| San Francisco        | 562                        |

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Finances of Public School Systems in 1980-81 (GF 81 No. 8).

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TABLE 9  
BOND RATINGS OF LARGE CITY SCHOOL-DISTRICTS  
1983

| City School District | Bond Rating   |
|----------------------|---------------|
| New York             | Ba 1 <u>1</u> |
| Los Angeles          | Aa            |
| Chicago              | B             |
| Philadelphia         | B             |
| Detroit              | Baa           |
| Houston              | Aaa           |
| Phoenix              | Aa            |
| Dallas               | Aaa           |
| Baltimore            | A 1 <u>1</u>  |
| Memphis              | Aa <u>1</u>   |
| San Diego            | AA            |
| Washington           | NR            |
| Milwaukee            | AA <u>1</u>   |
| New Orleans          | A             |
| Cleveland            | Ba            |
| Boston               | Ba <u>1</u>   |
| Indianapolis         | Aa            |
| St. Louis            | Baa 1         |
| San Antonio          | A 1           |
| San Francisco        | Aa <u>2</u>   |

1 City rating - dependent school district

2 City issues all bonds for school district

NR = No rating listed, borrows through federal government

Ratings - Aaa, best quality

Aa, high quality

A, upper medium grade

Baa, medium grade

Ba, have speculative elements

B, lack characteristics of  
desirable investment

Strongest investments in category are designated by  
a "1" after the rating

Source: Moody's Municipal and Government Manual, 1983, Moody's  
Investors Service.

Finally, per pupil expenditures for capital outlay are shown. Again, there is wide variation in this category reflecting local conditions and circumstances.

#### Debt

The amount of debt per pupil is often considered to be a good indicator of fiscal health. Districts with low debt outstanding per pupil at the end of the 1980-81 fiscal year were Indianapolis (\$12), St. Louis (\$125), San Diego (\$149), and Los Angeles (\$330). (See Table 8). Among these, the low per pupil debt in St. Louis is certainly not a sign of robust fiscal health. High debt per pupil was found in Boston (\$3,181), Chicago (\$2,015), and Cleveland (\$1,704). These are all city school districts with financial problems.

#### Bond Ratings

Table 9 shows the ratings for general obligation bonds in 1983 for the city school districts. In the case of dependent school districts, the overall city bond rating is shown. These ratings are those made by Moody's Investors Service. The highest bond ratings are held by Houston and Dallas. Also rated high quality are Los Angeles, Phoenix, Memphis, San Diego, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, and San Francisco. Less desirable ratings were found for Baltimore, New Orleans, and San Antonio. Bonds issued by Detroit and St. Louis are only medium grade, while those of New York, Cleveland, and Boston are considered to have speculative elements. Finally, bonds issued by Chicago and Philadelphia are rated as lacking characteristics of desirable investments.

These bond ratings show how the financial community rates the current financial condition of the city school districts. The rating a school district receives can make a substantial difference in the interest rate paid for district borrowing.

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